

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 IO-13 HA-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
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P R 311214Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3380
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USUN NEW YORK 5717

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, PDEV, IS
SUBJ: WEIZMAN'S PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO SHILO WEAKENS

REF: (A) JERUSALEM 1276, (B) TEL AVIV 5643, (C) TEL AVIV 2788

1. IN A MOTION FOR THE AGENDA, MK YOSSI SARID OF THE
ALIGNMENT CALLED MAY 30 FOR REMOVAL OF THE GUSH EMUNIM
SETTLEMENT AT SHILO. HE STATED THAT DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER
ZIPORI HAD LIED TO THE KNESSET ON FEB. 8 WHEN HE SAID THAT
THE RESIDENTS AT SHILO WERE MEMBERS OF AN ARCHEOLOGICAL
TEAM AND THAT NO SETTLEMENT WOULD BE ESTABLISHED THERE
WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT DECISION. SARID POINTED OUT THAT NO
ARCHEOLOGICAL DIGGING IS TAKING PLACE BUT NONE THE LESS
A SETTLEMENT HAS TAKEN SHAPE THERE. HE QUOTED FROM A GUSH
PUBLICATION WHICH DESCRIBED PLANS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AT SHILO AND THE YESHIVA (RABBINICAL SCHOOL) FUNCTIONING
THERE. SARID NOTED THAT WEIZMAN HAD DECLARED THAT HE
WOULD RECOMMEND REMOVAL OF THE SETTLERS IF THERE WOULD BE NO
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DIGGING AT SHILO (REF C). HE ASKED HOW LONG WEIZMAN INTENDED
TO WAIT.

2. IN HIS REPLY WEIZMAN STATED THAT HE WAS NOT HAPPY
ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED AT SHILO, BUT HE HAD SEEN THE SAME
SORT OF THING OCCUR IN THE PAST. (THIS WAS AN APPARENT
REFERENCE TO THE ILLEGAL GUSH SETTLEMENT AT KADDUM WHICH

WAS ALLOWED BY THE RABIN GOVERNMENT TO REMAIN ON A TEMPORARY BASIS AND WHICH WAS ULTIMATELY APPROVED BY THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT.) WEIZMAN SAID THAT THE CAMP AT SHILO HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO CARRY OUT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS AND GRANTED THAT SARID'S STATEMENTS WERE BASICALLY CORRECT. HOWEVER, HE STATED THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF CONDUCTING A DIG AT THE SITE WAS STILL BEING EXAMINED. SO LONG AS NO CABINET DECISION WAS TAKEN ON THE MATTER, THERE WAS NO REASON TO DECIDE ON THE EVACUATION OF THE SETTLERS. BEFORE RECOMMENDING THAT THE MOTION BE DEFEATED, HE STATED: "I STAND BEHIND THE THINGS THAT KNESSET MEMBER SARID QUOTED ME AS SAYING AND I INDEED SAID THEM." THE KNESSET, BY A VOTE OF 32 TO 28 (WITH 7 MEMBERS OF THE DMC ABSTAINING) DEFEATED SARID'S MOTION.

3. COMMENT: WEIZMAN HAS CLEARLY LOWERED HIS PROFILE ON THE SETTLEMENTS QUESTION. ALTHOUGH HE PROBABLY REMAINS OPPOSED TO DEVELOPMENTS AT SHILO, HE APPARENTLY HAS DECIDED NOT TO EXPOSE HIMSELF TO FURTHER ATTACKS WITHIN HERUT BY AGAIN EXPLICITLY EXPRESSING HIS OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION TO THE SHILO SETTLEMENT. THUS, WEIZMAN'S POSITION NOW APPEARS TO BE APPROACHING THAT OF BEGIN. IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THE GUSH HAD NOT ILLEGALLY SETTLED AT SHILO, BUT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE GOI TO FORCIBLY EVACUATE IT NOW.
LEWIS

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